

**Kathmandu --** The prevention of mother to child transmission (PMTCT) of HIV is a critical component of the National HIV and AIDS Strategy for Nepal. There are currently 15 hospital sites across the country with facilities to test mothers and provide medicines to HIV positive mothers to prevent babies from becoming HIV positive at birth. Five new hospital sites and seven community-based sites are expected to open this year.

Family Health International Nepal, under the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded ASHA Project and on behalf of the National Center for AIDS and STD Control (NCASC), Ministry of Health and Population, recently applied and was selected for two global donation programs that provide free test kits and drugs for the PMTCT programs for the entire country. USAID/Nepal works with the Family Health International through the ASHA Project, focusing on HIV/AIDS surveillance, prevention, treatment, care and support.

The first donation program will provide 82,000 free Determine HIV Rapid Test Kits in 2009. The Determine Test Kit is used to screen pregnant women for HIV. The second donation program will provide 360 doses of Viramune medicine and other accessories. This drug greatly reduces the risk of transmission of HIV to the baby at birth.

USAID's ASHA project is a member of the National Logistics Task Force working under the NCASC. The Task Force includes representatives from NCASC, FHI, USAID, UNICEF, UNDP, and the USAID/DELIVER Project. The DELIVER Project works to strengthen national HIV/AIDS logistics management systems.

The amount of test kits and drugs is based on the expected needs of the national PMTCT program, and these donation programs will replenish supplies as needed based on their use.